

GHOSTLY

10¢ A N C NO. 121

WEIRD

STORIES

HIS HEART TREMBLED WITH FEAR AS HE BEHELD THE TERRIBLE APPARITION WHICH HOVERED IN THE BLACKNESS OF THE CASTLE TOWER! HIS BLOOD RAN COLD WITH DREAD AS IT REACHED FORTH ITS CLAMMY HANDS AND SEIZED HIM IN A GRIP OF DEATH. SLOWLY HE FELT HIS LIFE EBBING AWAY. HE KNEW THERE WAS BUT ONE WEAPON THAT COULD SAVE HIM, BUT COULD IT BE USED IN TIME?





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Terrible Encounter

by JAY DISBROW



HIS HEART TREMBLED WITH FEAR AS HE BEHELD THE TERRIBLE APPARITION WHICH HOVERED IN THE BLACKNESS OF THE CASTLE TOWER! HIS BLOOD RAN COLD WITH DREAD AS IT REACHED FORTH ITS CLAMMY HANDS AND SEIZED HIM IN A GRIP OF DEATH. SLOWLY HE FELT HIS LIFE EBBING AWAY. HE KNEW THERE WAS BUT ONE WEAPON THAT COULD SAVE HIM, BUT COULD IT BE USED IN TIME?

MY NAME IS JIM SANFORD. I ALWAYS CONSIDERED MYSELF TO BE A PRETTY AVERAGE FELLOW, LIVING AN AVERAGE LIFE, WITH VERY LITTLE EXCITEMENT TO PROVIDE DIVERSION FROM MY DAILY ROUTINE. BUT THAT ALL CHANGED ABRUPTLY, ONE EVENING, WHEN I RETURNED FROM THE OFFICE, AND WAS GREETED BY MY WIFE, DANN, WHO WAS QUITE EXCITED-----

JIM, A TELEGRAM JUST CAME! IT SAYS YOU'RE THE SOLE HEIR OF THE KOLIGAR ESTATE IN UPPER VERMONT!

WHAT?----SAY, LET ME SEE THAT TELEGRAM!

THAT'S WHAT IT SAYS, ALL RIGHT, BUT ACCORDING TO THIS, THE PLACE IS AN ANCIENT CASTLE WHICH SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE IS HAUNTED!

WELL, WHO EVER HEARD OF A CASTLE THAT DIDN'T HAVE A GHOST OR TWO? THEY'RE NEEDED TO PROVIDE THE PROPER ATMOSPHERE!

IT MAY NOT BE A JOKING MATTER, DANN, SOME PEOPLE PLACE A GREAT DEAL OF CREDDENCE IN SUCH THINGS!----- BUT, IN ANY EVENT, THIS MAY BE A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY, AND I'M NOT GOING TO PASS IT UP!

I KNEW YOU'D FEEL THAT WAY, DANN! LET'S PACK AND BE ON OUR WAY!



WE MADE THE TRIP WITHOUT INCIDENT, AND THE FOLLOWING DAY, WE ARRIVED AT THE FORBIDDING ESTATE. IT WAS LOCATED MILES FROM ANY TOWN, IN A REMOTE WOODED AREA OF THE COUNTRY. I FELT DAWN SHUDDER WITH SUPPRESSED FEAR, AS SHE BEHELD THE SOMBER CASTLE.

HMMMM, NO WONDER SOME MIGHT THINK IT WAS HAUNTED! IT'S CERTAINLY A FRIGHTFUL LOOKING PLACE!

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT IT THAT, ---NO! I WON'T BE FRIGHTENED AWAY BY ITS APPEARANCE! IT BELONGS TO US, AND WE'RE GOING TO TAKE POSSESSION!

THIS CASTLE WAS TRANSPORTED, STONE BY STONE, FROM ENGLAND, THIRTY YEARS AGO, AND THE GHOST CAME WITH IT! LISTEN CLOSELY, AND I'LL TELL YOU HOW THE GHOST OF KOLIGAR CASTLE HAD ITS BEGINNING!

PERHAPS, YOU CAN TELL ME SOMETHING ABOUT THIS GHOST THAT IS BELIEVED TO HAUNT THIS PLACE! DO YOU BELIEVE THE LEGEND?

I BELIEVE WHAT I SAW WITH MY OWN EYES, AND I DID SEE THE GHOST! I KNOW HE DOES EXIST!



"KIVAN WAS A MAN OF FIERY PASSION! WHEN HE SAW SOMETHING HE WANTED, HE TOOK IT, IN SPITE OF ANY OBSTACLE THAT STOOD IN HIS WAY, AND HE WANTED THE BEAUTIFUL REBECCA, WIFE OF PHILLIP, HIS BEST FRIEND----

I LOVE YOU, REBECCA! I MUST HAVE YOU!

NO, KIVAN, IT CAN NOT BE! I BELONG TO ANOTHER!



AS WE MADE OUR WAY ACROSS THE GROUNDS OF THE ESTATE, WE PRESENTLY DISCOVERED AN ELDERY MAN WORKING IN A FLOWER BED.

OH, THEY HELLO THERE, I'M SAID YOU AND YOUR WIFE WOULD JIM SANFORD, MOST LIKELY BE COMING UP THE NEW OWNER HERE! MY NAME IS CLEM CROMWELL, I'M THE GARDENER!



"THIS CASTLE WAS ORIGINALLY OWNED BY A FIERCE, TYRANNICAL DESPOT, NAMED 'KIVAN, THE TERRIBLE', WHO LIVED DURING THE MIDDLE AGES. HE FOUGHT WITH A RECKLESS ABANDON THAT STRUCK TERROR IN THE HEARTS OF HIS FOES!"



KIVAN! NO!

"KIVAN PLOTTED THE DEATH OF THE WOMAN'S HUSBAND, AND ONE NIGHT, WHEN THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED ITSELF, HE KILLED THE MAN, STRUCK HIM DOWN IN COLD BLOOD!"



"THE TOWNSPEOPLE HEARD OF THE TERRIBLE DEED, AND THEY CONVERGED UPON THE CASTLE TO EXACT PUNISHMENT UPON HIM. KIVAN SAW THEM COMING AND TOOK REFUGE IN THE EAST TOWER!"

THEY SEEK TO TAKE MY LIFE! I MUST HIDE!



"BUT THE ENRAGED CITIZENS FIRED THE TOWER—"

DESTROY THE EVIL ONE!

DEATH TO THE MURDEROUS SWINE!



"THE WICKED TYRANT WAS TRAPPED IN A PRISON OF HIS OWN MAKING! HE PERISHED IN THE FLAMES!"



"THE CENTURIES ROLLED BY, BUT THE SPIRIT OF KIVAN THE TERRIBLE COULD FIND NO REST. HIS EVIL SOUL WAS DENIED ETERNAL TRANQUILLITY, BECAUSE OF HIS EVIL CRIME! DOWN THROUGH THE AGES, HIS GHOST HAS HAUNTED THIS CASTLE!"



EEEEK!

AS THE OLD MAN CONCLUDED HIS NARRATIVE, I LOOKED AT HIM AND SAID—

THAT'S A VERY CHILLING STORY, CLEM, BUT IT'S TOO FANCIFUL TO BE TRUE! IN FACT, BUT I'M SURE IT'S TREMENDOUSLY EXAGGERATED!

BUT IT'S ALL TRUE! I SAW THE GHOST SEVERAL TIMES, PEERING FROM THE WINDOWS OF THE EAST TOWER! THE ONLY REASON I'M ALIVE TODAY, IS BECAUSE I'VE NEVER GONE INTO THE CASTLE AT NIGHT!



WE PROCEEDED TO EXAMINE THE INTERIOR OF THE CASTLE, AND IN THE BASEMENT, WE MADE A STARTLING DISCOVERY—

I IGNORED THE OLD MAN'S WARNING, AND DAWN AND I TOOK UP RESIDENCE IN THE ANCIENT EDIFICE.

WELL, I CAN CARRY ON MY WORK FROM HERE FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS! THAT'LL GIVE US TIME TO LOOK THE PLACE OVER, THEN MAYBE I'LL SELL IT WHEN MY TITLE IS CLEAR! FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE!



GOOD HEAVENS!



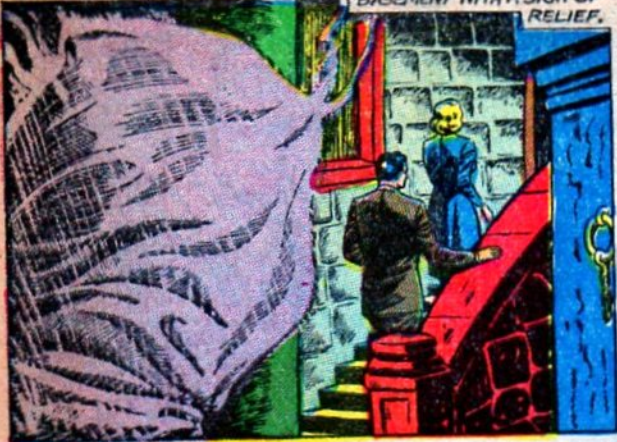
AIEECH!

MY BLOOD FROZE IN MY VEINS AS I LOOKED UPON THAT TERRIBLE VISAGE OF DEATH—

OH, IT'S HORRIBLE! NO! THERE'S NO SIGN OF JIM! SOMEONE MUST HAVE KILLED HIM AND HID THE BODY HERE! VIOLENCE ON THE BODY! AND NOTICE HIS EYES! HOW THEY BULGE! I THINK THIS MAN WAS FRIGHTENED TO DEATH!



I CALLED THE POLICE, AND WHEN THEY ARRIVED SEVERAL HOURS LATER, THEY EXAMINED THE BODY, AND CAME TO THE SAME CONCLUSION I HAD; CAUSE OF DEATH: HEART FAILURE INDUCED BY SHOCK! THEY WERE UNABLE TO IDENTIFY THE CORPSE, SO THEY REMOVED IT, AND THE INCIDENT WAS CLOSED. DAWN AND I QUITTED THE DARK BASEMENT WITH A SIGH OF RELIEF.



OUR NERVES WERE FRAYED AS WE RETIRED THAT NIGHT, AND IN THE SMALL HOURS OF THE MORNING, WE WERE AWAKENED BY A HORRIBLE MOANING SOUND...

JIM, JIM!
WHAT WAS THAT?

I-I DON'T KNOW!

OOOOAH



OOOOAH

IT'S COMING FROM THE CORRIDOR! REMAIN CALM, THERE'S SOMETHING OUT THERE! I'LL GO OUT AND SEE WHAT IT IS!



WITH TREMBLING FINGERS I OPENED THE DOOR AND STEPPED INTO THE CORRIDOR. THERE WAS NO ONE IN SIGHT, BUT I MADE A DISCOVERY THAT FILLED ME WITH MISGIVING...

THERE'S NOTHING HERE, BUT I-----THERE SEEMS TO BE THE ODOR OF SMOKE IN THE AIR! YES, IT SMELLS LIKE BURNING RAGS!

I SMELL IT TOO, BUT THERE'S NOTHING BURNING OUT HERE! JIM, DO YOU SUPPOSE-----?



SLEEP WAS ALMOST AN IMPOSSIBILITY AFTER THAT! EVERY NIGHT WE WERE AWAKENED BY THE TERRIBLE SCREAMS AND MOANS! BUT THE CLIMAX CAME WHEN WE HEARD THE CLANKING AND SCRAPING OF CHAINS MOVING THROUGH THE HALL...

I CAN'T STAND ANY MORE, JIM! I'M LEAVING THIS AWFUL PLACE IN THE MORNING!

I DIDN'T ANSWER DAWN'S INCOMPLETE QUESTION; I DIDN'T WANT TO DWELL UPON THE POSSIBLE ORIGIN OF THE ACRID ODOR!...THE NEXT NIGHT, THE FRIGHTFUL INCIDENT WAS REPEATED...

LISTEN, JIM, THAT MOANING SOUND, IT'S BACK AGAIN! GET HOLD OF YOURSELF, DAWN! I'LL GET MY PISTOL AND INVESTIGATE!

OOOOAH



NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, THE HORRIBLE MOANING SMOTE UPON OUR EARS, AND EACH TIME I ENTERED THE CORRIDOR, IT WAS EMPTY! THIS TERRIBLE SITUATION WAS BEGINNING TO TELL ON BOTH OF US...

JIM, JIM, YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING! I GO OUT AND DESTROY THAT THING, WHATEVER IT IS!

IT'S NO USE, DAWN! THERE'S NOTHING OUT THERE! IT MUST BE THE WIND HOWLING IN THE BATTLEMENTS OF THE WALLS OUTSIDE!



OOOOOAH



DON'T GIVE IN TO IT, DAWN! SOMEONE MUST BE TRYING TO FRIGHTEN US AWAY SO THEY CAN TAKE POSSESSION OF THE ESTATE! WE'VE GOT TO SEE IT THROUGH!

FINALLY, I SUCCUMBED TO SLUMBER, BUT DAWN, DRIVEN TO THE VERGE OF DESPERATION, SLIPPED QUIETLY FROM THE BEDROOM---

I'VE GOT TO FIND OUT WHAT IT IS! I'VE GOT TO SEE FOR MYSELF! I CAN'T STAND THIS LINGERING DOUBT, THIS TERRIBLE SUSPENSE!



SHE TOOK UP A POSITION BEHIND AN ANCIENT SUIT OF ARMOR, AND WAITED FOR THE AUTHOR OF THE AWFUL SOUNDS TO MAKE AN APPEARANCE.

HE'S COMING! I CAN HEAR THE CLANK OF CHAINS IN THE DISTANCE! WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S GETTING CLOSER! IT'LL BE HERE IN AN OTHER MOMENT!



THE NIGHT WAS SUDDENLY RENT BY A FRIGHTFUL SCREAM! I AWOKE INSTANTLY, AND KNEW DAWN WAS IN DEADLY PERIL!



I SPRANG INTO THE CORRIDOR, MY HEART POUNDING WITH DREAD! I KNEW DAWN MUST BE IN THE CLUTCHES OF SOME NAMELESS THING OF HORROR! THE HALL WAS DESERTED, BUT AGAIN I HEARD HER SCREAM IN THE DISTANCE!

I'M COMING, DAWN!

AIEECH!!



I FOLLOWED HER CRIES UP THE STONE STEPS THAT I KNEW LED TO THE OLD EAST TOWER. THE NOXIOUS ODOR OF SMOLDERING CLOTH WAFTED TO MY NOSTRILS! I KNEW INSTINCTIVELY THE AWFUL DISCOVERY I WAS ABOUT TO MAKE

JIM, JIM!



I BURST INTO THE SOMBER TOWER, AND I BEHELD THERE A SIGHT WHICH SENT A SHUDDER OF STARK TERROR COURSEING THROUGH MY FRAME! THE FRIGHTENED GIRL WAS STRUGGLING IN THE EMBRACE OF A SPECTER OF INDISCRIBABLE HORROR.

YOU CHOSE TO IGNORE THE WARNING GIVEN YOU, MORTAL, AND THUS YOU PAY FOR YOUR FOLLY WITH YOUR LIFE, AND THE LIFE OF THIS MAID!



THE THING DROPPED DOWN, AND LUNGED AT ME. I FELL BACK AGAINST THE WALL, FIRING MY PISTOL AS I WENT DOWN. THE BULLETS PASSED COMPLETELY THROUGH THE CREATURE, INFLECTING NO HARM UPON IT.

DIE! WHY DON'T YOU DIE? FOOL, YOU CAN NOT KILL THAT WHICH IS DEAD ALREADY!



I FOUGHT AGAINST THAT TERRIBLE CREATURE WITH ALL THE STRENGTH THAT DESPERATION IMPARTS TO A DYING MAN! BUT AS THOSE CLAMMY FINGERS OF DEATH CLOSED ABOUT MY THROAT, I KNEW THAT ONLY A MIRACLE COULD SAVE MY LIFE!



MY HAND SUDDENLY CLOSED UPON THE HILT OF A DAGGER, AND I SLASHED AND HACKED AT THE THING WITH IT. NO! NO! IT IS THE

KNIFE! BLADE I USED TO MURDER REBECCA'S HUSBAND! IT HAS BECOME A WEAPON OF JUSTICE! IT IS THE ONLY WEAPON THAT CAN DESTROY ME!



AS I TRANSFIXED THE ECTOPLASMIC HEART OF THE THING, IT SUDDENLY SCREAMED HORRIBLY, AND VANISHED IN A SHEET OF FLAME. NO, NO! THE

ETERNAL FLAMES ARE ENVELOPING ME! MY DOOM IS SEALED! AAGH!



AND THEN, THE NIGHT WAS SHATTERED BY A VIOLENT, RENDING CONCUSSION. THE TOWER EXPLODED.



HOW LONG WE WERE UNCONSCIOUS, I DON'T KNOW, BUT THE SUN WAS SHINING WHEN WE CAME TO. WE WERE LYING AT THE FOOT OF THE TOWER AMID SCATTERED DEBRIS.

IT--IT COULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED! IT DID HAPPEN! IT MUST HAVE IMAGINED THE WHOLE THING! NO, IT WAS REAL! IT WASN'T IMAGINATION!



JIM, YOU'RE STILL HOLDING THE KNIFE YOU USED ON THE GHOST! LOOK, IT'S SMOLDERING!

YES, AND IT'S EMITTING THE SAME NOXIOUS ODOUR OF BURNT RAGS THAT SURROUNDED THE GHOST! THIS SEEMS TO BE THE FINAL PROOF!....AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, I NO LONGER DOUBT THE EXISTENCE OF THE SUPER-NATURAL!



GEMS OF DEATH..

IT had been a long and wearisome trip finding the jewels and Jack Adams, turning back, saw an end to it, in spite of the long safari trail to the Congo and then the ride by dugout. At Boma he would meet Justine and they would be married. The jewels would pay for their honeymoon and would set Jack up as a professional engineer, once they got back to the States.

Leaning against the litter Jack dreamed of Justine and of home—in particular, his own home, which was very tied up with Justine.

"Snap out of it, Jack!" called a voice behind him. That was Curly Cullen, also riding a litter. "You ain't safe home yet. Best you cut out the dreamin'!" Curly was rough, but he was pure gold. He would make a good foreman. He knew bridge construction.

"Dry up," said Adams, grinning. "Or by Christopher, I'll drown you in the river when we come to it."

"Yeah, when," replied Curly. Jack noticed in the attempt at lightness in Curly's voice that he was trying to warn him. "It's a long trip."

"You're thinking about McFarl," said Jack. "So am I. But a guy can dream." He gripped the Winchester more tightly, fingering the trigger of the gun that lay across his knees.

McFarl made the ivory trade pay off, but he had a bad reputation. He controlled a band of outlaw tribes and they had ambushed more than one safari. N'Gona Joe had told Jack and Curly that McFarl knew about the jewels.

Jack Adams hated McFarl for other reasons. He couldn't prove it, but along the Congo the tribes had told Jack that it had been McFarl and his cutthroats who had ambushed his own father, Ronald Adams, the famous explorer.

McFarl even then had learned of the gift of jewels that the mountain chieftain had given to the elder Adams. The tribes said McFarl had been furious when he couldn't find the gems in the party.

"Yeah," said Jack half aloud, partly to Curly and partly to himself, "I know about McFarl. I hope to meet up with him. I really think I'll go looking for him!"

"Hey, what did you say?" demanded Curly.

"Dreaming," answered Jack.

Jack still had the last letter from his father. The letter said: "I'm leaving the jewels in trust with Chief R'Laiza and send herewith a map to his tribal camp. Should anything happen to me, the jewels are yours, my boy. It is little enough an adventurer like me can leave you for your years of loneliness, without a father's guidance, without a mother's love."

Jack realized how lonely the years of his boyhood had been then. His mother had died before he was two. His father was ever being commissioned to travel unknown trails. All his early life had been spent in the hands of nursemaids and private schools, later private secondary schools and then college. Then he had become a man before manhood, shifting for himself, learning things the hard way.

N'Gona Joe, scouting ahead, returned excitedly on the run. He came breathlessly toward Jack. "He come! He come! White man killer!" The black's eyes rolled in terror. "Many spear come him!"

McFarl had jumped the gun. Adams had not expected him to search them out till they were nearer the river. It was easier to destroy a trail near the river. A few miles down and then back into the jungle. But here, with the dogs he had brought, trailing would be less

CONTINUED AFTER ADS

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difficult. That was Jack's warning. McFarl intended to wipe out the entire party, dogs and all.

Jack sprang from his litter to the ground. "This is it, Curly," he said evenly. In a single leap Curly stood beside him.

"I'll get in a few before they get me," he said.

"This is my party," said Adams. "You take N'Gona Joe and his men. Be ready to come when I call. It'll be a hot fight . . . perhaps."

"You're a dope," said Curly.

There was a soggy dampness to the ground. Jack's foot made a suction noise before he was ready to act. McFarl barged through the underbrush, a rifle leveled at him. Behind him the black outlaws showed in dark menacing movement.

"This is a real pleasure," said McFarl. "I sort of thought you might be along."

"A thief and a killer might want to know things," said Adams. "That is where you'll sweat in vain, McFarl."

McFarl laughed. "You'll tell," he said. "Your father I could believe when he said the jewels were elsewhere, but nothing BUT them would bring YOU here." The coldness of McFarl's eyes told Adams the man was desperate and ruthless. He was half a head taller than Adams and forty pounds heavier. "Drop your rifle," he said.

Adams watched McFarl's eyes glitter as he saw the rifle drop. The weapon McFarl was using was of the same make, but a much older model. "Pick it up and hand it here instead," McFarl said. "It's not easy to get your paws on a gun like that out here."

As McFarl took Adams' gun from him, he tossed his own weapon aside. Leveling Adams' own gun on him, McFarl said, "Get 'em up high, Adams."

Instead Jack Adams shoved his hand under

his shirt. "Why?" he asked as his right hand moved with lightning swiftness. "You're going to knock me off anyway! Why not make it rough for you." Even as he finished speaking Adams had in his hand a .45 Colt Automatic from the shoulder holster under his shirt.

The fury of McFarl's snarl indicated the menacing hatred in this double-cross.

"You fool!" he roared and his trigger finger sprang the rifle's hammer.

There was a blast and a cry of pain and surprise. It was not Adam's rifle that had gone off. It was the automatic that Adams had fired. McFarl lay dying.

"I should of blasted you with my own gun!" McFarl gasped. "If your rifle hadn't jammed!"

A black crashed through the underbrush. Adams let him have it between the eyes. "Curly!" Jack shouted.

A ferocious cry went up in the jungle. Curly was there as arranged. Adams sprang into the fight. They and their men, with angered N'Gona Joe leading his tribesmen, sent the McFarl blacks back on their heels. Those who lived through the first fusillade, ran for the safety of the jungle, to hide and nurse their wounds.

Adams returned to McFarl. "You were saying you should have used your own gun, McFarl. That's right! I was banking on your greed! But my gun didn't jam." Here Adams emptied the magazine of its cartridges. Shaking one of the cartridges into his palm he said, "See? Instead of bullets these cartridges were carrying the gems you wanted. You held them in your hands for a while and didn't know it!"

McFarl was only able to gasp. Curly yelped, "Yahoo! You crazy galoot! McFarl fell hook, line and sinker!"

Adams looked toward the ground. "Come on, Curly," he replied. "No sense gloating over a dead man's mistakes. It's still a long trip to my honeymoon!"

The CASE OF THE SHRUNKEN HEADS..



POLICE IN ONE OF AMERICA'S LARGEST CITIES WERE UTTERLY BAFFLED BY A MACABRE MYSTERY THAT SEEMED NOT TO BELONG IN THE CITY AT ALL—BUT IN THE STEAMING DEPTHS OF SOME FAR OFF JUNGLE! A GREAT MUSEUM WAS TURNED INTO A BLOODY SHAMBLES, AND THE ECHO OF WEIRD VOODOO RITES WAS HEARD THROUGH THE CITY CANYONS! ALL OF WHICH GO TO MAKE UP ONE OF THE MOST THRILLING OF STORIES—**THE CASE OF THE SHRUNKEN HEADS!**

WHILE THE CITY SLEEPS A CLOAKED FIGURE STEALTHILY ENTERS THE METRO MUSEUM...

AT LAST! AFTER SO MANY YEARS! JUST ONE MORE HURDLE TO GET PAST—THE GUARD BY THE DOOR! THEN I'LL HAVE—IT!

HATE TO DO THIS TO YOU, OLD MAN! BUT THERE IS NO OTHER WAY—TOO EASY TO HEAR INTRUDERS IN A MUSEUM AT NIGHT. SO YOU JUST TAKE A LITTLE SLEEP! ALL I WANT IS IT!

AND SECONDS LATER...

AHH—HERE IT IS! CLEVER OF MY HUSBAND TO HAVE IT PLACED IN A MUSEUM, THE LAST PLACE IN THE WORLD THE POLICE WOULD LOOK FOR IT! BUT—CHUCKLE—JUST WAIT UNTIL HE READS THAT IT HAS BEEN STOLEN!

THOUGHT I HEARD SOMETHING—OH!!

NEXT MORNING, POLICE MAKE AN INVESTIGATION OF THE UNUSUAL CRIME...

BROTHER! I'VE GOT AN IDEA THIS IS GOING TO BE ONE OF THOSE TOUGH ONES! AND NOT A CLUE OF ANY KIND—A REAL PROFESSIONAL JOB. EVEN SMART ENOUGH NOT TO KILL THE WATCHMAN! BUT HE'S NO HELP!

ISN'T IT ODD, SIR, THAT THEY DIDN'T TOUCH ALL THESE JEWELS? JUST TOOK ONE LITTLE SHRUNKEN HEAD! DOESN'T MAKE MUCH SENSE!



SO HERR VON CRUMP, DISTINGUISHED AUTHOR AND LECTURER, RETURNS TO HIS CLUB WITH THE PAPER AND SEARCHES AVIDLY FOR A CERTAIN STORY...

YES! AS I FEARED. SOMEONE HAS GOTTEN THE HEAD! SOMEONE OUT OF THE JUNGLE—AND OUT OF MY PAST! ALWAYS BEEN AFRAID OF THIS—AND IT MEANS LIFE IN PRISON, OR DEATH! GOT TO GET THAT HEAD BACK AT ALL COSTS, THEN TAKE LEONA AND RETURN TO THE JUNGLE!



HMM— YOU'RE RIGHT, OF COURSE! BUT JUST THE SAME WE'LL LEAVE FOR THE JUNGLE AT ONCE. WHOEVER HAS THE HEAD WILL HAVE TO FOLLOW US! AND WHEN THEY DO, I'LL GET THE HEAD BACK AND MAKE SURE THEY NEVER GET ANOTHER CHANCE TO BLACKMAIL ME!

NOW YOU'RE BEING SENSIBLE, MY DEAR!



AND IN THE CITY'S THRONGING STREETS ANOTHER ACT OF THE MYSTERIOUS DRAMA BEGINS...

EXTRA! PAPER! READ ALL ABOUT THE MISSING HEAD MYSTERY! MUSEUM ROBBED!

HEAD! THE MUSEUM! I WONDER...

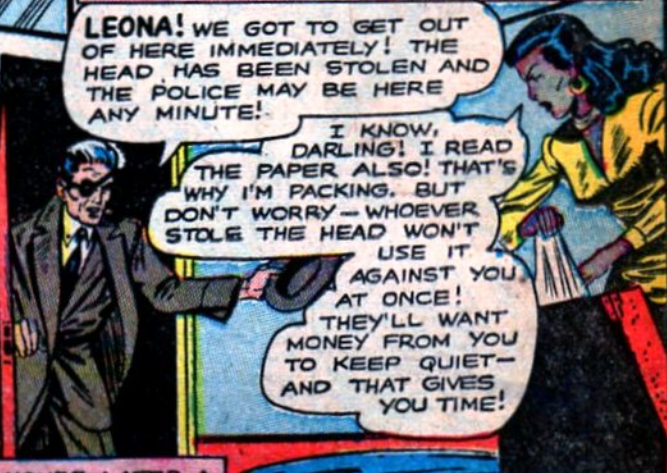
HERE, BOY! GIVE ME ONE OF THOSE PAPERS! QUICKLY!



AND IN THE NEXT ROOM HE FINDS HIS LOVELY NATIVE WIFE ALSO PACKING...

LEONA! WE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE IMMEDIATELY! THE HEAD HAS BEEN STOLEN AND THE POLICE MAY BE HERE ANY MINUTE!

I KNOW, DARLING! I READ THE PAPER ALSO! THAT'S WHY I'M PACKING. BUT DON'T WORRY—WHOEVER STOLE THE HEAD WON'T USE IT AGAINST YOU AT ONCE! THEY'LL WANT MONEY FROM YOU TO KEEP QUIET—AND THAT GIVES YOU TIME!



SOME HOURS LATER A MESSENGER ENTERS POLICE HEADQUARTERS TO DELIVER A SMALL PACKAGE...

HERE YOU ARE, OFFICER! SOME GOOD-LOOKING WOMAN GAVE ME FIVE BUCKS TO DELIVER THIS PACKAGE TO YOU! DON'T KNOW WHAT'S IN IT— BUT IT SURE WAS AN EASY WAY TO MAKE FIVE BUCKS!

THANK YOU, KID! AND YOU STICK AROUND— MIGHT WANT TO TALK TO YOU!



MOMENTS LATER THE CHIEF GETS QUITE A SURPRISE...

GOOD GRIEF! A H-HEAD! A SHRUNKEN HEAD. GOT TO BE THE ONE THAT WAS TAKEN FROM THE MUSEUM LAST NIGHT. BUT WHY WOULD ANYONE SEND IT TO US?—UNLESS IT'S SOME KIND OF A MESSAGE! MUST BE THE REASON! I'LL HAVE IT ANALYZED RIGHT AWAY!



GIVE THIS HEAD THE WORKS FOR ME, JOE! EVERYTHING! I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT IT THAT SOMEONE WANTS US TO FIND OUT!

CHECK, CHIEF! WHEN WE GET THROUGH, YOU'LL EVEN KNOW THE NAME OF THE GUY'S GRANDFATHER!

WELL, I'LL BE—THIS IS A FUNNY DEAL! THIS IS NO NATIVE HEAD! DISTINCTLY NOT! THE HEAD OF A WHITE MAN! WAIT TILL THE CHIEF HEARS ABOUT THIS!

SAY—WAIT A MINUTE! I'VE GOT AN IDEA—THIS MAY TIE IN WITH SOMETHING BIG!

AND AN HOUR LATER... YOU SEE, CHIEF, NOW IT JUST MAY TIE IN! WE WENT THROUGH THE FILES AND GOT THAT OLD PAPER! VON CRUMP GAVE THAT HEAD TO THE MUSEUM—AND SHORTLY BEFORE THAT HIS PARTNER HAD MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARED! NO ONE SUSPECTED ANYTHING—BUT NOW THAT THIS TURNS OUT TO BE THE HEAD OF A WHITE MAN...

HMM—I'LL LOOK INTO IT!

BY JOVE! I THINK THE BOYS HAVE STUMBLLED ONTO THE REAL TRUTH! WE DIDN'T HAVE A SHRED OF PROOF AGAINST HIM AT THE TIME—BUT THIS CERTAINLY CHANGES THINGS. I'D BETTER HAVE HIM PICKED UP ON SOME CHARGE OR OTHER UNTIL WE'RE SURE!

BUT WHEN THEY REACH THE APARTMENT OF VON CRUMP THEY FIND THE BIRDS HAVE FLOW...

NOTHING HERE OF ANY USE, SIR! CLEAN AS A HOUND'S TOOTH! I'LL GO RIGHT DOWN AND PUT OUT A GENERAL ALARM!

TOO LATE! NO TELLING WHERE THEY ARE BY NOW! PROBABLY HEADED BACK FOR THE JUNGLE HE KNOWS SO WELL! BUT I STILL WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHO SENT THAT HEAD!

EXTRA!
PARTNER OF
VON CRUMP DISAPPEARS
MURDER IS BELIEVED!

DAYS LATER WE FIND VON CRUMP AND HIS WIFE MAKING LABORIOUS PROGRESS UP A JUNGLE STREAM...

WHAT, MY DEAR? I DON'T THINK I QUITE KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN?

YOU KNOW, LEONA, THE NEARER WE GET TO THE VILLAGE THE MORE I THINK I KNOW WHO STOLE THAT HEAD! WHO COULD IT BE BUT THE ONE PERSON WHO REALLY KNOWS THAT I MURDERED MY PARTNER?

BUT I DO KNOW! HE IS NOT SUCH A FOOL AS I BELIEVED HIM! HE BEGINS TO SUSPECT—THAT I SENT THE HEAD TO THE POLICE! NOW HE IS DANGEROUS, AND I MIGHT AS WELL KILL HIM! NOW AS LATER!

YOU ARE PERFECTLY RIGHT, DARLING! I DID STEAL THE HEAD AND SEND IT TO THE POLICE! IF THEY DID NOT GET YOU, AT LEAST WE WOULD RETURN HERE AND I WOULD HAVE MY CHANCE! THIS IS IT! NOW I GET ALL YOUR MONEY!

AHHHH!

HOURS LATER, LEONA MOORS THE BOAT AT A SMALL RIVER VILLAGE...

JUST THE PLACE! THE ONLY POST OFFICE IN A THOUSAND MILES! I'LL GET MY BUSINESS DONE HERE AND THEN VISIT MY OWN PEOPLE BEFORE I GO BACK TO AMERICA AND CLAIM MY HUSBAND'S FORTUNE! BETTER NOT RUSH THINGS—AND ANYWAY IT WILL TAKE TIME FOR THIS LITTLE PACKAGE TO REACH THE POLICE!

GOING TO BE A VERY SURPRISED BUNCH OF POLICEMEN WHEN THEY GET THIS PACKAGE! AND MY STORY IS PERFECT—SOME OF HIS OLD ENEMIES CAPTURED MY HUSBAND AND KILLED HIM BEFORE MY EYES! HA! I'LL BE VERY MUCH THE GRIEF-STRIKEN WIFE!

HO! IS THAT NOT LEONA, THE MAIDEN WHO USED TO BE OF MY OWN VILLAGE? SHE DARES TO RETURN AFTER SHE AIDED HER WICKED HUSBAND TO LOOT MY PEOPLE! SHE IS HATED BY ALL—AND I WILL HAVE A GREAT REWARD IF I CAN CAPTURE HER!

OHH— THAT MAN! LOOKS FAMILIAR— TOO FAMILIAR! OF COURSE, IT'S ONGTI— OF MY OLD VILLAGE! I USED TO PLAY CHILD'S GAMES WITH HIM— BUT HE WILL HATE ME NOW!

GOT TO GET AWAY FROM THAT MAN! I KNOW WHAT HE'S AFTER—WANTS TO TAKE ME BACK TO THE TRIBE! THEY'LL KILL ME FOR WHAT I DID TO THEM SO LONG AGO! BUT IF I CAN MAKE IT TO THAT HOUSE—A FRIEND OF MY HUSBAND USED TO LIVE THERE—HE'LL SAVE ME!

BUT SUDDENLY...

SO, MAIDEN WHO BETRAYED US! YOU STILL KNOW ONGTI! NOW YOU PAY FOR YOUR CRIMES!

NO! PLEASE, ONGTI! I KNOW YOU! DON'T HARM ME— I'LL DO ANYTHING!

LONG AGO, WHEN THE ONE CALLED VON CRUMP CAME TO OUR VILLAGE, YOU BECAME HIS BRIDE AND AIDED HIM TO ROB OUR PEOPLE OF ALL THE GOLD AND JEWELS OUR PRIESTS HAD ACCUMULATED FOR MANY YEARS! WE HAVE WAITED LONG FOR YOUR RETURN!

MY PEOPLE WILL REJOICE GREATLY WHEN THEY SEE WHAT I HAVE BROUGHT TO THEM! YOUR DEATH WILL NOT BE AN EASY ONE, LEONA!

PLEASE! I HAVE ALL MY HUSBAND'S MONEY NOW! I'LL MAKE YOU RICH— ONLY PLEASE LET ME GO FREE!

LEONA IS BROUGHT BEFORE THE JUNGLE CHIEF AND SOON LEARNS HER FATE...

IF YOU WILL CAUSE THE WHITE-MAN'S PAINT TO BE SCRUBBED FROM THIS ONE'S FACE, YOU WILL SEE THAT THIS IS THE MAID OF OUR TRIBE CALLED LEONA!

YOU ARE A GREAT WARRIOR, ONGTI - BUT YOU NEED NOT TELL ME THESE THINGS! I, TOO, KNOW THIS MAID! SHE MUST PAY FOR HER CRIME!

OH- I'M DOOMED! FIND NO MERCY HERE!

AS LEONA WAITS FOR HER DEATH, HER ANGRY KINSMEN PERFORM THE ANCIENT RITES OF A DISHONORABLE DEATH...

I'M DONE FOR! THEY'LL KILL ME IN A FEW MINUTES NOW! OH- I WANT TO LIVE! MAYBE I COULD UNDO SOME OF THE HARM I'VE DONE IN MY LIFETIME! BUT IT'S- SOB- TOO LATE NOW! ALWAYS THE WAY!

AND SOON JUNGLE JUSTICE IS DONE...

AIEEE- WE TAKE THE FALSE MAIDEN TO BE BURIED!

WAA- PERHAPS IT IS BAD TO KILL ONE SO BEAUTIFUL!

NO, MY CHIEF! HER BEAUTY WAS THAT OF AN EVIL FLOWER!

WEEKS LATER, IN AMERICA, THE POLICE OF A CERTAIN TOWN RECEIVE ANOTHER MYSTERIOUS PACKET...

CHIEF! HERE'S A PACKAGE ALL THE WAY FROM A LITTLE JUNGLE TOWN IN AFRICA! MAYBE THIS IS THE BREAK IN THE VON CRUMP CASE - THE ONE YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!

I HOPE SO! THE PAPERS ARE STILL RIDING ME BECAUSE THAT CHARACTER GOT AWAY. OPEN IT UP, WALTERS!

WOW! THE HEAD OF VON CRUMP! HE SURE DOESN'T LOOK MUCH LIKE THE SAME MAN!

NO! BUT IT IS HE, SURE ENOUGH! PAID FOR HIS CRIME, TOO! SOMEONE DID THE SAME THING TO HIM AS HE DID TO HIS PARTNER!

BUT WHO COULD HAVE MURDERED HIM AND SHRUNKEN HIS HEAD? MAYBE THIS NOTE WILL GIVE US A CLUE-ANYWAY NOW WE CAN CALL THE CASE CLOSED AND MAYBE THE NEWSPAPERS WILL STOP RIDING ME!

DEAR CHIEF: YOUR MYSTERY, OF WHICH I HAVE HEARD BY RADIO, HAS BEEN SOLVED. MY JUNGLE PEOPLE INFORM ME THAT VON CRUMP'S WIFE MURDERED HIM AND SENT YOU HIS SHRUNKEN HEAD! A FIT ENDING FOR SUCH A ROGUE. BUT SHE ALSO MET JUSTICE, FOR HER OWN TRIBE CAPTURED HER AND PUT HER TO DEATH ALWAYS THE SAME, ISN'T IT, WITH THESE CROOKS? REGARDS, THE COMMISSIONER

The End

JOE KERR HATED PEOPLE, HE HATED ANIMALS, HE HATED EVERYTHING ABOUT THE TEEMING CRAWLING CITY. IT WAS TOO MUCH FOR HIM! IF ONLY THERE WERE NO PEOPLE AND NO NOISE, IF ONLY EVERYONE WOULD DISAPPEAR.....

THE LAST MAN ALIVE.



NOT LONG BEFORE THIS STRANGE EVENT TOOK PLACE, JOE KERR WAS FED UP WITH PEOPLE... THE WHOLE TEEMING CRAWLING MASS OF PULSATING LIFE... BUT JOE HAD TO LIVE, AND HE HAD NOTHING BUT HIS JOB AS ELEVATOR OPERATOR #4 IN THE GRAYMERE BUILDING....



C'MON, JOE SNAP TO IT! YER SIX MINUTES LATE! MAYBE YOU OWN THIS BUILDING?



A TYRANNICAL BOSS, RUDE AGGRESSIVE PEOPLE. JOE HAD TO TAKE A LOT OF GUFF...

YOUNG MAN, I CAN'T YOU MOVE THIS ELEVATOR ANY FASTER? IF I'M LATE FOR MY APPOINTMENT WITH MY HAIRDRESSER, I'LL MAKE TROUBLE FOR YOU!

YES MAM!

OLD BOSS!!!





IT SEEMED THAT HE COULDN'T HELP RUBBING PEOPLE THE WRONG WAY. FOR YEARS, JOE HAD TO PUT UP WITH THIS STATE OF AFFAIRS, AND HE WAS RAPIDLY COMING TO THE BOILING POINT...



EVEN THE OTHER EMPLOYEES NEEDED HIM.. THE CHANCES WERE, IF JOE WAS A BETTER SPORT, THEY WOULD LEAVE HIM ALONE. BUT HE WAS ALDOOF AND HE WAS UNFRIENDLY TO HIS CO-WORKERS..



JOE HEADS FOR HOME...

I CAN'T STAND THEM... MUST GET... AWAY...



HE FINALLY REACHES HIS LONELY LITTLE ROOM SOAKED IN A COLD SWEAT...

I-I CAN'T STAND PEOPLE. THEY'RE ALL PICKING ON ME. IF ONLY THERE WERE NO PEOPLE!



GEE, THAT WOULD BE SOMETHIN' NOBODY IN THE WHOLE TOWN BUT ME! NOBODY BOTHERIN' ME! AH WELL, IT CAN'T HAPPEN...



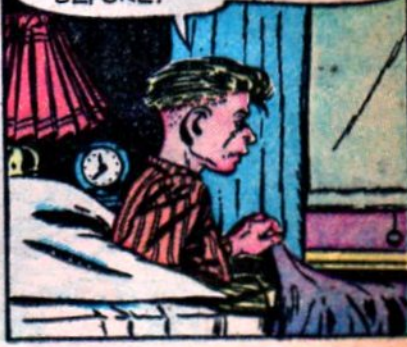
YOU FEELIN' ALL RIGHT, MAC?

YES. YES! - I'M ALL RIGHT!



NO, IT CAN'T HAPPEN, CAN IT? WHY... IT'S TOO FANTASTIC - TOO... ILLOGICAL.

YEOHHH! AH! ANOTHER DAY, MORE PEOPLE BOTHERIN' ME... SAY! IT'S AWFUL QUIET THIS MORNING... FUNNY, I DON'T HEAR THOSE KIDS NEXT DOOR... OR THAT DOG ACROSS THE STREET... THAT NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE!



AAH, WELL! BETTER GET GOIN' OR I'LL BE LATE FER WORK!



APPARENTLY, JOE HAD FORGOTTEN HIS STRANGE WISH HE HAD WANTED THE NIGHT BEFORE. AS HE WALKED OUT OF HIS HOUSE, HE NOTICED AN UNNATURAL HUSH AND A COMPLETE ABSENCE OF ACTIVITY WHICH HAD NEVER OCCURED BEFORE....

HEY, I WONDER WHERE EVERYBODY IS. THE WHOLE STREET'S EMPTY! NOT EVEN A PIGEON IN THE PARK. WELL, I DON'T CARE. I WANT BREAKFAST.



HE STEPS INTO A DINER...
FOOD IS COOKING, TABLES
ARE SET, BUT NOT A
LIVING THING.....

HEY! ANYBODY HERE? HOW
'BOUT SOME SERVICE? I'LL
HELP MYSELF AND PAY THE
COOK WHEN HE COMES BACK.



BINDING A PREPARED BREAK-
FAST, HE EATS IT... STILL, NO-
ONE SHOWS UP!!

SAY, WHAT'S GOIN' ON? I'LL JUST
WALK OUT WITHOUT PAYING
THAT'LL TEACH THEM!

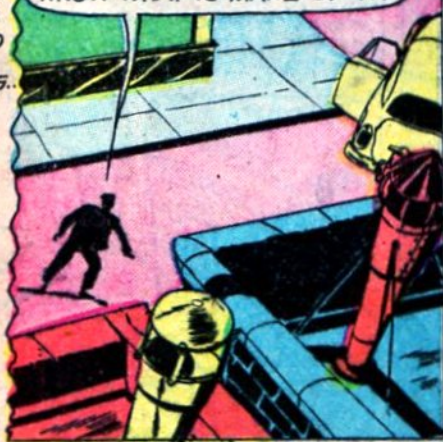


SOMETHIN' FUNNY GOIN' ON, NOBODY
SHOWED UP YET! WHERE DID
EVERYBODY GO? I WONDER IF...
...AW, THAT CAN'T BE!!



HE CONTIN-
UES DOWN
THE SILENT
DESERTED
STREET! NO
VEHICLES
ARE MOVING...
...NOT EVEN
A FLY IS
MOVING
ABOUT....

GOSH, ISN'T THIS THE STRANGEST
THING YOU EVER SAW? I DON'T
KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF IT!



HEY! THE BANK IS OPEN! I'M GONNA HELP
MYSELF, AS LONG AS NOBODY'S AROUND!



HE WALKS INTO THE DESERTED BANK AND
STARTS TO FILL HIS POCKETS WITH MONEY...

I'M RICH... RICH!



GLEEFULLY, HE STUFFS HIS POCKETS. HE GLANCES
FURTIVELY OVER HIS SHOULDER, THEN HE SCURRIES
OUT OF THE BANK!!!

I THINK I'LL HELP MYSELF TO A NEW WATCH!



WHY BOTHER WALKING IN,
I'LL JUST....



HE TAKES A WATCH OR TWO
AND A HANDFUL OF RINGS!

I'D BETTER GET OUT OF HERE
FAST! THE COPS'RE SURE TO
SHOW UP AFTER THIS!



BUT NO POLICE HOUND HIM AS HE
RAN DOWN THE SILENT GHOSTLIKE
STREET!!



IT MUST BE TRUE! I'M ALL ALONE IN THE CITY!
IT'S TRUE! TRUE! THE CROWD'S GONE, AND
I'M RICH! LESSEE, WHAT SHOULD I DO FIRST
IN MY CITY? MY OWN CITY!



WITHOUT REALIZING IT, JOE HEADED TOWARD
THE GRASMERE BUILDINGS

HEY, I WORK HERE... BUT I'M RICH! I DON'T
HAVE TO WORK AGAIN! WHERE'S THAT * * *
* * * BOSS OF MINE! HEY, BENSON!
WHERE ARE YOU, YA ROTTEN SLAVE
DRIVER? -- I QUIT!! YA HEAR?



JOE BE-
CAME
HYSTERICAL.
HE RUSHED
DOWN THE
DESERTED
LOBBY
SHRIEKING
WITH EXCIT-
ED LAUGH-
TER, CURSING
HIS BOSS
AND WILDLY
WAVING
HIS ARMS...

I'M RICH, AND I OWN EVERYTHING! THERE'S
NOBODY ELSE AROUND... BUT I MUST
BE SURE, ABSOLUTELY SURE!



HE BEGAN SEARCHING ALL THE ROOMS
WORKING HIS WAY UPWARD, FLOOR BY
FLOOR....



HE SEARCHED EVERY FLOOR UNTIL HE REACHED THE ROOF.

THERE ISN'T ANYBODY! THE CITY IS **MINE!** BUT I MUST BE SURE, I MUST BE **POSITIVE!**



THEN HE LEANS OVER THE EDGE SHOUTING WILDLY...

I OWN THE CITY! I AM THE TOWN! I... **YEAHHH!**



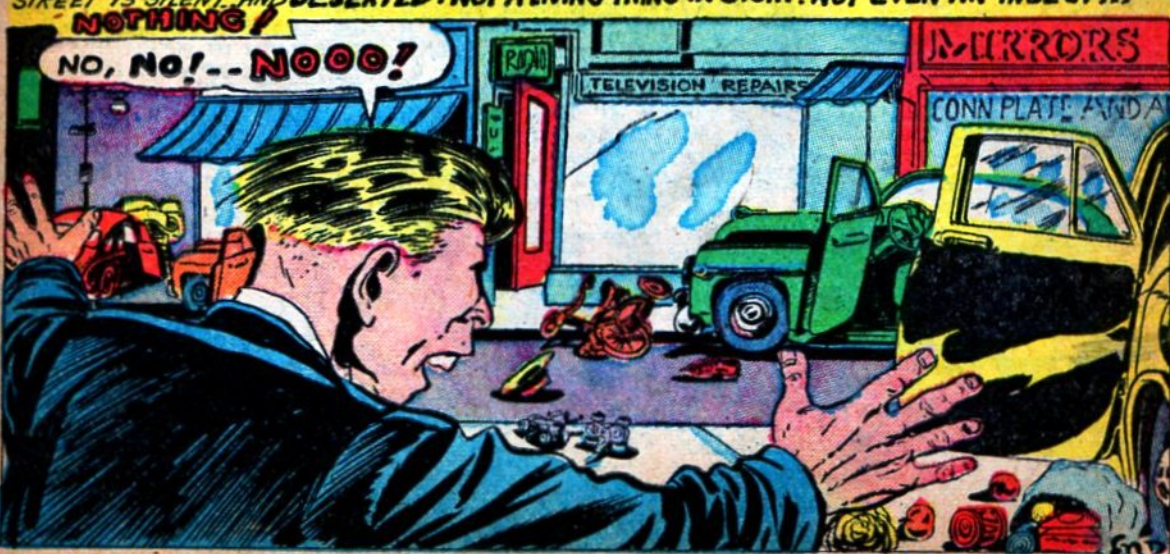
OHhh! A **DREAM!** GAD! WHAT A NIGHTMARE! BUT IT GIVES ME A NEW SLANT ON THINGS. I'M GLAD IT DIDN'T REALLY HAPPEN....



JOE DRESSED AND STARTED OUT TO WORK.. HE STEPS OUT OF HIS HOUSE... AND SEES... NO ONE! THE STREET IS SILENT, AND **DESERTED!** NOT A LIVING THING IN SIGHT! NOT EVEN AN INSECT...

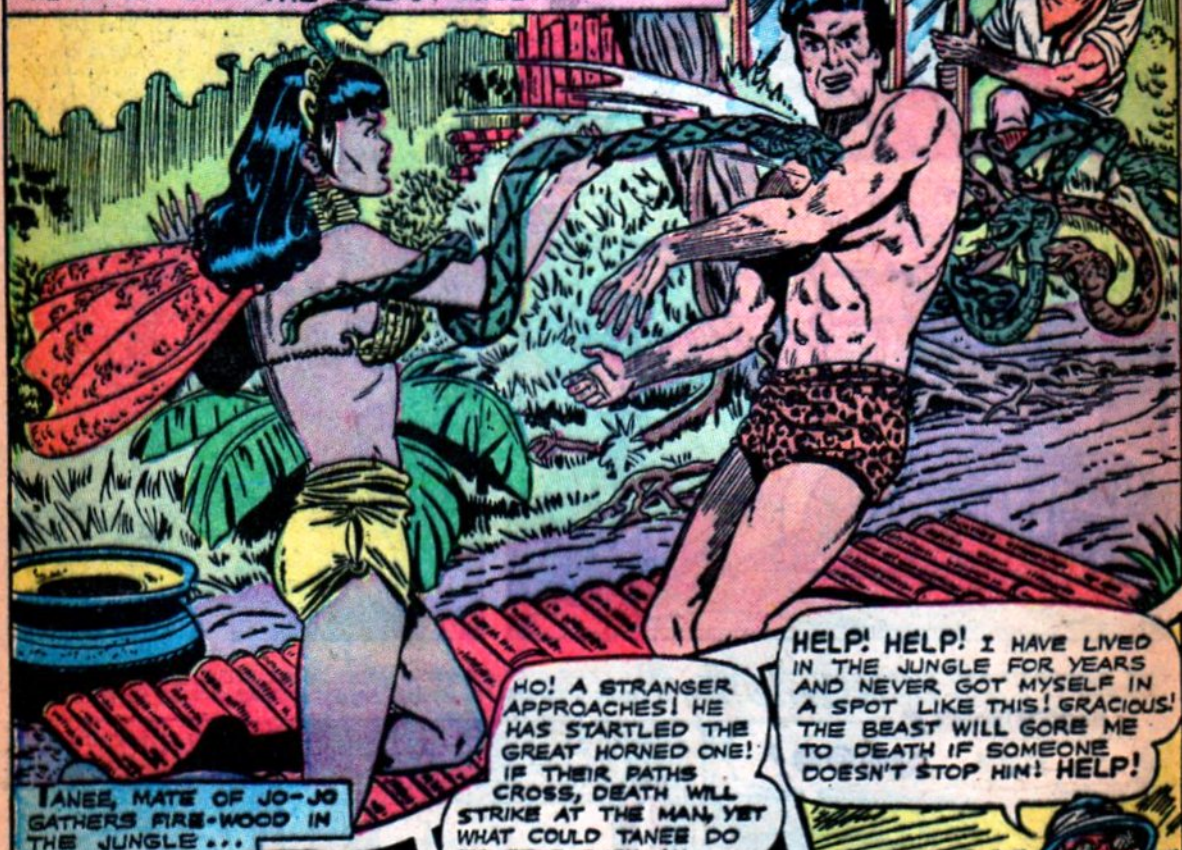
NOTHING!

NO, NO!... **NOOO!**



THE "COBRA KISS."

THE DREAD FANGED DEATH OF THE JUNGLE—KING COBRA—IS KNOWN AND FEARED FAR AND WIDE BY NATIVES AND STRANGERS ALIKE! EVEN JO-JO, CONGO KING, DOES NOT TAMPER WITH SUCH COILED SAVAGERY UNLESS IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY! BUT THE INTERTWINING JUNGLE FATES MADE IT NECESSARY—AND JO-JO ANSWERED THE CHALLENGE WITH ALL HIS LEGENDARY COURAGE! FOR THE SAKE OF HIS PEOPLE HE DARED EVEN THE COBRA KISS...



TANEE, MATE OF JO-JO GATHERS FIRE-WOOD IN THE JUNGLE...

TONIGHT WE WILL ALL CELEBRATE MIGHTILY—IT IS THE BIRTH DATE OF OUR MASTER AND MY MATE! THERE WILL BE FEASTING AND I WILL DANCE LONG FOR THE PLEASURE OF THE VILLAGE!

HO! A STRANGER APPROACHES! HE HAS STARTLED THE GREAT HORNED ONE! IF THEIR PATHS CROSS, DEATH WILL STRIKE AT THE MAN, YET WHAT COULD TANEE DO TO STOP SUCH AN ATTACK? I MUST GET JO-JO...

HELP! HELP! I HAVE LIVED IN THE JUNGLE FOR YEARS AND NEVER GOT MYSELF IN A SPOT LIKE THIS! GRACIOUS! THE BEAST WILL GORE ME TO DEATH IF SOMEONE DOESN'T STOP HIM! HELP!



JO-JO! JO-JO! COME QUICKLY! THE LONG-HORNED ONE SENSES THE SPOOR OF THE STRANGER AND EVEN THOUGH HIS PIG EYES CANNOT SEE, HE ATTACKS THE HELPLESS ONE!

MOVE ASIDE, LITTLE ONE, OR YOU, TOO, MAY STAND IN THE PATH OF THE THICK-SKINNED ONE! I WILL ATTEMPT TO STOP THIS, BUT I CANNOT THINK CLEARLY WITH SUCH SCREAMING RINGING IN MY EARS!

WHEW! THEY ARE RIGHT! THE RHINO CAN'T SEE WHERE HE'S GOING, HE ONLY SENSES! I HOPE THE JUNGLE MAN PREVENTS HIM FROM TURNING AROUND AND RENEWING HIS ATTACK!

I DO NOT LIKE TO KILL JUNGLE BEASTS BUT WHEN A HUMAN LIFE IS ENDANGERED BY THEM, IT BECOMES MY DUTY! MY BLADE MAY NOT BE AMPLIFIED TO PIERCE THE THICK HIDE OF SUCH A ONE... BUT I WILL TRY...

WAH! MY BLADE FALLS APART AS THOUGH I DASHED IT AGAINST A HUGE BOULDER! I HAVE BUT ENRAGED THIS HULK OF A CREATURE AND NOW WE ALL FACE HIS WRATH!

AIEE! HE KNOWS MANY TRICKS! WHY DID I NOT THINK BEFORE I MOUNTED HIM TO WAIT UNTIL HE WAS AWAY FROM TAMEE AND THE STRANGER... THIS WAY HE MAY YET KILL ONE OF US!

HE'S LEAVING! I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT!

IT IS RARE THAT SUCH A THING SHOULD HAPPEN, BUT I BELIEVE I DID PIERCE HIS FLESH AND FEAR ENTERED HIS SLOW THINKING BRAIN!

EVEN A JUNGLE BEAST WILL RETREAT TO SAVE HIS OWN LIFE... A PRIMITIVE INSTINCT THAT PREVAILS IN ALL CREATURES... I AM PLEASED THAT I WASN'T OBLIGED TO SLAY HIM AFTER ALL! BUT NOW LET US SPEAK OF YOU, STRANGER, AND YOUR MISSION INTO THESE PARTS...

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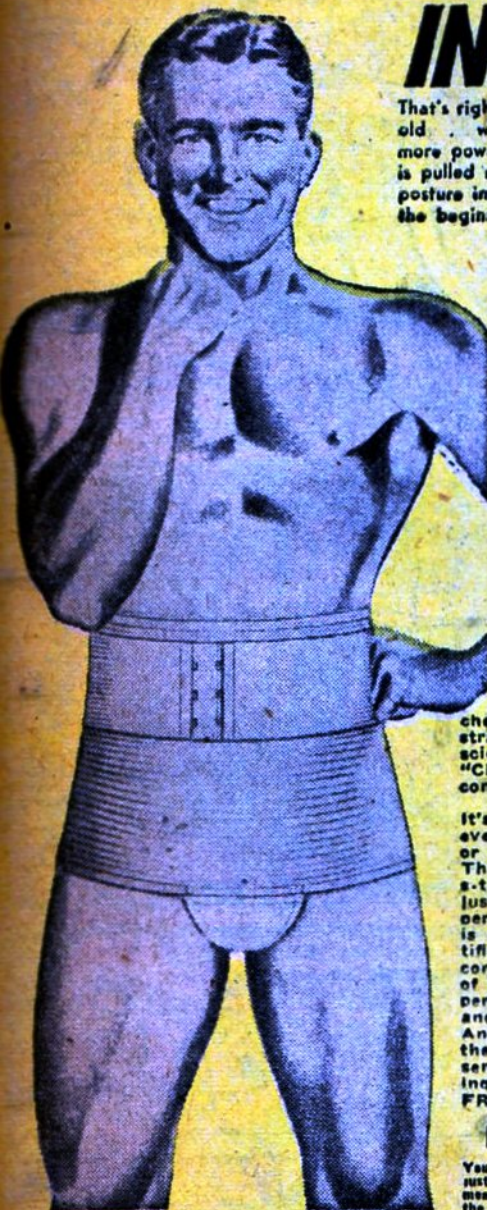
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RONNIE SALES, Inc.

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THE NAME IS ROBERTS, JO-JO, AND I WILL BE FOREVER GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR COMING TO MY AID AS YOU JUST DID! BUT TO GET DOWN TO BUSINESS... MY WIFE, JANECEE REQUESTS YOU TO COME TO HER... IMMEDIATELY, IF YOU WILL!

NO DOUBT YOU HAVE. SHE HAS A KINGDOM, TOO. OH, NOT AS YOU HAVE, JO-JO, JUST A SMALL SCALE... IN FACT, THERE ARE NO PEOPLE IN HER KINGDOM... JUST SNAKES... COBRAS TO BE EXACT! BUT YOU CAN FIND THIS ALL OUT YOURSELF, WHEN YOU TALK WITH HER!

AH, YES! NOW I PLACE THIS PERSON OF WHOM YOU SPEAK. WE WILL SET OUT FOR YOUR SNAKE KINGDOM, MY FRIEND, BUT TANECE MUST NOT ENTER THERE! SHE WILL RETURN TO THE VILLAGE, FOR IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE I COMPLETE SUCH A JOURNEY!

JANECEE? I HAVE HEARD THAT NAME BEFORE!

BUT, JO-JO! THE FEAST!

YOUR GIRL-FRIEND IS A BEAUTY, JO-JO! GUESS SHE WOULD HAVE PREFERRED COMING ALONG, TOO... TO KEEP YOU OUT OF TROUBLE, HA-HA!

SHE IS A BRAVE MAIDEN, BUT I HAVE TO THINK FOR HER SOME- TIMES FOR SHE CARES NOT FOR THE DANGERS OF THE JUNGLE AS LONG AS SHE IS BY MY SIDE...

DAYS LATER, JO-JO MEETS THE BEAUTEOUS QUEEN OF THE COBRAS...

AND THIS, JO-JO, IS MY WIFE! SHE KNOWS MORE ABOUT SNAKES THAN ANY PERSON LIVING!

I AM HONORED. I HAVE HEARD TALES OF YOUR WORK WITH THE SCALY CREATURES. IT IS SAID YOU ARE TEACHING THEM NOT TO KILL, EXCEPT FOR THAT WHICH THEY MUST USE AS FOOD!

I HAVE WAITED A LONG TIME FOR THIS MOMENT, JUNGLE LORD. IT IS JANECEE WHO IS THE HONORED ONE!

WHILE NOT FAR AWAY, A FAMILIAR FIGURE MAKES HER WAY THROUGH THE JUNGLE...

IT IS NOT THAT I WOULD DISOBEY MY MATE, BUT SOMETHING WARNS ME OF A MYSTERY TO SUCH A SUMMONS...

AIEE! PERHAPS IT WAS THIS THAT FILLED ME WITH FOREBODING! COBRA! OH... JO-JO! HELP ME! I INTENDED KEEPING MY PRESENCE A SECRET, BUT NOW... OHHHH...

THAT CRY! I TOLD TANEI TO RETURN TO THE VILLAGE, YET TRULY IT SOUNDS LIKE HER VOICE! WHOEVER IT MAY BE, THEY ARE IN GREAT DISTRESS, SO LOUDLY DO THEY CALL OUT!

NOW I KNOW IT IS MY MATE! WHAT HAS BEFALLEN HER? SHE CRIES OUT AS IF IN A DEATH STRUGGLE!

I DO NOT HESITATE TO DISMEMBER YOU, UGLY ONE! YOU WILL DIE AS QUICKLY AS YOU WOULD KILL! MY BLADE HAS BEEN MENDED JUST IN TIME TO BE OF GOOD USE!

HE... HE WAS GOING TO DEVOUR ME!

HE WILL DEVOUR NO MORE! FOR HIS SCALY THROAT IS WELL SLIT! AND JUST TO MAKE CERTAIN, I WILL PLUNGE MY DAGGER AGAIN AND AGAIN! NOW! HIS BODY SAGE AND HIS HOLD ON ME LOOSENS... HE DIES!

DID I NOT WARN YOU, LITTLE ONE? EVEN THOUGH YOU CROSSED MY WORDS AND CAME TO THIS PLACE, I CANNOT ESCORT YOU BACK TO THE VILLAGE...

I SAW WHAT HAPPENED... I DID NOT KNOW THAT SUCH A REPTILE ROAMED THESE PARTS, THAT IS, UNTIL A FEW DAYS AGO... HE IS NOT ONE OF MINE! YOU DID WELL TO SLAY HIM, JO-JO!

I AM RELIEVED THAT IT WAS NOT ONE OF YOUR PETS I HAD TO SLAY! THIS MAIDEN WILL REMAIN UNTIL I LEAVE AS I COULD NOT SEND HER BACK TO HER VILLAGE UN-ESCORTED!

I REALIZE I'VE BEEN VERY WRONG, JO-JO, BUT I GIVE MY OATH NEVER TO GET IN YOUR WAY AGAIN UNTIL YOU DESIRE IT!

VERY WELL, BUT SEE-THAT SHE KEEPS IN THE BACKGROUND. I DO NOT TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ANY INTRUDERS ABOUT HERE. BUT COME, JO-JO... I WISH TO SHOW YOU MY WORK! PERHAPS YOU WOULD LIKE TO WITNESS THE TAMING PROCESS. I EMPLOY WITH THE DEADLY COBRA?

THIS YOUNG ONE HAS ONLY BEEN WITH ME A FEW DAYS. HE IS NOT FULLY TRAINED, BUT WATCH CLOSELY HOW HE RESPONDS TO MY VOICE AND THE TEMPTING FOOD I OFFER!

I WILL LEARN MUCH FROM YOU, JANECE. WE HAVE NOT THE SCALY ONES IN OUR VILLAGE AND I AM IGNORANT OF THEIR HABITS!



NOW WATCH CLOSELY JO-JO! I HOLD MY HAND IN FRONT OF THE COBRA'S HEAD WHILE HIS HOOD IS SPREAD, WHICH SHOWS HE IS ANGRY OR EXCITED!

WAH! WHAT MANNER OF WOMAN IS THIS WHO FLIRTS WITH DEATH FROM THE FORKED-TONGUED ONE?

HE CAN ONLY STRIKE AS FAR AS THE DISTANCE WHICH HE IS RAISED OFF THE GROUND! I KNOW THIS, THAT IS WHY I KEEP MY HANDS AWAY FROM HIM AT JUST THE RIGHT DISTANCE.

AFTER SEVERAL STRIKES HE WILL DESPAIR AT NOT BEING ABLE TO BITE ME, AND THEN...

SOON HE WILL STRIKE AT ME, BUT I KNOW HE WILL MISS, FOR HIS MOVEMENTS ARE SLOW AND SLUGGISH!

I WILL LET HIM STRIKE ME ONLY BECAUSE IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO SINK HIS FANGS INTO MY FLESH BECAUSE I HOLD MY HAND ABOVE HIS HEAD, MAKING IT DIFFICULT! HE STRIKES THE FLAT SURFACE OF MY HAND! HIS TEETH, MUCH LIKE A HUMANS, CANNOT BITE OBJECTS WHICH ARE FLAT AND BIGGER THAN HIS MOUTH!

YOU SEE, HE IS TIRED... NOW I SHOW HIM I AM HIS FRIEND BY STROKING HIS HEAD IN A SOOTHING FASHION. SOON HE WILL BE AS TRAINED AS ALL MY OTHER PETS!

AMAZING! I HAVE NEVER SEEN SUCH A FEAT!

HE FOLDS HIS HOOD, SHOWING COMPLETE TRUST OF ME! BUT NOW THAT YOU HAVE SEEN ALL THIS, JO-JO, I MENTION THE TRUE REASON FOR INVITING YOU HERE! I NEED YOUR HELP!

IF THE CAUSE IS WORTHY AND I CAN BE OF AID, I WILL JOYFULLY DO SO!

FOR SOME TIME NOW THE NEARBY NATIVES WILL NOT LEAVE THEIR VILLAGE, EXCEPT TO GO AWAY FOREVER! THEY DARE NOT HUNT AND ARE STARVING! IT IS BECAUSE OF SNAKES, BUT THEY ARE NONE OF MINE... IT IS A MYSTERY EVEN I CANNOT FATHOM! I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET RID OF MANY, STILL THEY RETURN IN EVEN GREATER NUMBERS!

HELP ME SOLVE THIS MYSTERY, JUNGLE MAN! I AM CONVINCED IT IS THE WORK OF HUMAN HANDS... AND YOU ARE SO BRAVE AND STRONG!

I... I HOPE THAT MY JUNGLE EXPERIENCE CAN BE A HELP TO YOU!



HM! IT DOESN'T TAKE LONG FOR MY FAIR WIFE TO BECOME ATTRACTED TO JO-JO! I WAS A FOOL TO BRING HIM HERE IN ORDER TO APPEASE HER SUSPICIONS! BUT NOW IT IS OBVIOUS THAT SOMETHING DRASTIC MUST BE DONE!

MY COLLECTION OF WILD SNAKES WILL SERVE ME WELL AND MAKE JO-JO REGRET THE DAY HE CAME HERE! NOW THAT SHE'S TOLD HIM ABOUT MY PLAN TO INFEST THE JUNGLE WITH SNAKES, I WILL HAVE TO GET RID OF BOTH OF THEM... OR I'LL NEVER GET TO CULTIVATE THE RICH SOIL IN THIS TERRITORY!

WHO ELSE WOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF THIS BRILLIANT IDEA! I WILL SUBSTITUTE A WILD SNAKE IN PLACE OF THIS PET OF JANECEE'S WHO DOESN'T STRIKE AT ME! LUCKY THEY ARE THE SAME SIZES AND MARKINGS! SHE'LL NEVER KNOW THE DIFFERENCE!

JANECEE! JANECEE! YOUR FAVORITE COBRA IS ACTING STRANGELY ILL! I THINK HE'S ABOUT TO DIE! PERHAPS YOUR SOOTHING HANDS COULD HELP THE LITTLE FELLOW!

MY COBRA! OHH... I HOPE YOU'RE MISTAKEN! COME, JO-JO! QUICKLY! I MUST DO SOMETHING...

I'LL LOOK AT HIM FIRST TO DETERMINE HIS AILMENT...

IF HE IS YOUR PET HE WON'T HARM ME EITHER! I THINK I CAN HELP... I HAVE LEARNED MUCH FROM YOU!

HOW STRANGE HE ACTS! I SEE NO SIGNS OF ANYTHING WRONG! STAND BACK, JO-JO! DON'T COME TOO CLOSE, HE HAS NEVER ACTED THIS WAY BEFORE!

PERHAPS IF I STROKED HIS NECK AS YOU DO...

AHH... HE MOVED FASTER THAN I EXPECTED! HE HAS STRUCK ME! EVEN NOW THE POISON SEEPS INTO MY BODY!

THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE! I'VE NEVER SEEN MY PET ACT LIKE THIS! WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING, JO-JO... OR YOU'LL DIE!

HEH-HEH! WHAT CAN THEY DO? NO ONE HAS EVER SURVIVED THE STING OF THE DEADLY COBRA KING!

JO-JO! MY MATE! THAT SNAKE STABBED YOU WITH HIS VENOM FANGS! NEVER DOES THAT HAPPEN WITHOUT DEATH FOLLOWING CLOSE BEHIND - BUT WHAT CAN WE DO? I WOULD AID YOU WITH MY OWN LIFE - BUT THAT WOULD NOT SAVE YOU!

YOU CAN HELP, TANEE

BOTH CAN HELP JO-JO! YOU, TANEE, HASTEN TO THE PLACE WHERE THE COBRA PLANTS GROW! GATHER SOME OF THE BLOSSOMS AND HURRY TO ME WITH THEM. WHILE YOU ARE GONE, MY OTHER FRIEND SHALL USE MY BLADE TO GASH MY ARM - PERHAPS SOME OF THE POISON WILL FLOW OUT WITH THE BLOOD!

I GO AT ONCE, JO-JO!

AND AS TANEE GATHERS THE DELICATE COBRA BLOSSOMS...

AIEEE - IT IS SAID THAT MANY OF THE DEADLY SCALY ONES NEST HERE AMON THESE BLOSSOMS! BUT I CARE NOT FOR THAT - I WOULD RISK DEATH MANY TIMES FOR THE LIFE OF MY JO-JO! IF ONLY I AM IN TIME TO SAVE HIM!

HAH! JO-JO'S GIRL PICKING THE COBRA BLOSSOMS! JUST WHAT I'VE BEEN SAVING MY LITTLE PET FOR! SHE'LL NEVER SAVE HIS LIFE WITH THOSE FLOWERS! SHE CAN'T EVEN SAVE HER OWN NOW!

OHH - A SPOTTED KILLER BEAST SPRINGS TO SLAY ME. NO TIME TO ESCAPE. AND MY MATE, WHO WOULD SAVE ME, WILL HIMSELF DIE UNLESS I TAKE THESE BLOSSOMS TO HIM! OOO-SOMEONE HELP ME!

AND FROM THE DENSE JUNGLE STEPS A HANDSOME MAN...

BUT NOTHING IS CERTAIN IN THE JUNGLE - NEITHER LIFE NOR DEATH! SO EVEN AS TANEE RESIGNS HERSELF TO DEATH, THE FATES ARE WORKING A MIRACLE IN HER FAVOR! COMES THE SUDDEN TWANG OF A TAUT BOWSTRING AND THE FLASHING FLIGHT OF AN ARROW...

I DO NOT KNOW YOU, STRANGE WARRIOR, BUT YOUR AIM IS INDEED TRUE. HAD IT NOT BEEN, I WOULD NOW BE A VICTIM OF THE DEVIL CAT. LET ME GIVE YOU A THOUSAND THANKS!

I HAVE HEARD THAT JO-JO IS IN THESE PARTS, FAIR ONE! I MUST SPEAK WITH HIM AT ONCE! FOR I KNOW WHO DOES THIS EVIL WITH THE SNAKES!

AIEEE - SOME HIDDEN ARCHER SAVES MY LIFE! JUST IN TIME! ONE MORE BREATH AND THE CLAWED KILLER WOULD HAVE RIPPED ME TO DEATH! BUT WHO COULD HAVE BEEN SO KIND TO TANEE?

JANEED LEADS THE STRANGER
TO WHERE JO-JO LIES...

AIEEE- MY MATE BREATHES EASIER
NOW! PERHAPS MUCH OF THE POISON
HAS LEFT HIS BODY. THIS DRESSING
OF BLOSSOMS WHICH I BRING SHOULD
MAKE HIM EVEN BETTER!

YOU SPEAK WELL, LITTLE ONE!
I WAS MUCH WORRIED AT YOUR
NEWS- BUT NOW I SEE HE WILL
LIVE!

WAA- MY HEAD WHIRLS LIKE
FOAMING WATER! AND MY
STOMACH LEAPS ABOUT LIKE
A PLAYFUL BABY APE!

AGHH- NEVER HAS JO-JO
BEEN SO SICK! BUT EVEN
NOW I GET BETTER- FOR

CANNOT
I TALK
AND
SEE?

I THANK ALL THE
JUNGLE GODS, MY
MATE! SURELY NOW
YOU WILL LIVE!

I HAVE NEWS FOR YOU, KING
OF THE CONGO! THE MAN
CALLED ROBERTS IS EVIL! IT IS
HE WHO WORKS AGAINST YOU
AND PLANTS DEATH EVERY-
WHERE IN THE JUNGLE! HE
SOUGHT TO TAKE YOUR LIFE
WITH A HOODED SNAKE-
AND ALSO HE SEEKS
THE LIFE OF HIS OWN
BRIDE!

THERE IS A SUDDEN INTERRUPTION AS
JANEED COMES SCREAMING FROM THE
JUNGLE...

HELP! PLEASE! A FANGED ONE PURSUES
ME! D-DON'T LET IT BITE ME! POISON!
I'LL DIE! OOO! SOMEONE! PLEASE!

AIEEE- A
GIANT COBRA
STALKS
OUR
FRIEND
FOR THE
KILL!

WAH- MY
KNIFE HAS
EYES THAT
GUIDE IT TRUE!
NOW ONCE AGAIN IS JO-JO
HIMSELF! AND HE UNDERSTANDS
MUCH THAT WAS COVERED BY
DOUBT SHADOWS BEFORE! HO!
THIS IS BUT THE
START OF MY
ACTIONS TO
PUNISH AN
EVIL KILLER!

THANK YOU, GREAT ONE!
THAT COBRA ALMOST
STOLE MY LIFE, HAD IT
NOT BEEN FOR YOU! I
COULD NOT TAME SUCH
A ONE AS THIS- HE
WAS MAD AND SOUGHT
TO USE HIS VENOM ON
THE FIRST HE SAW!

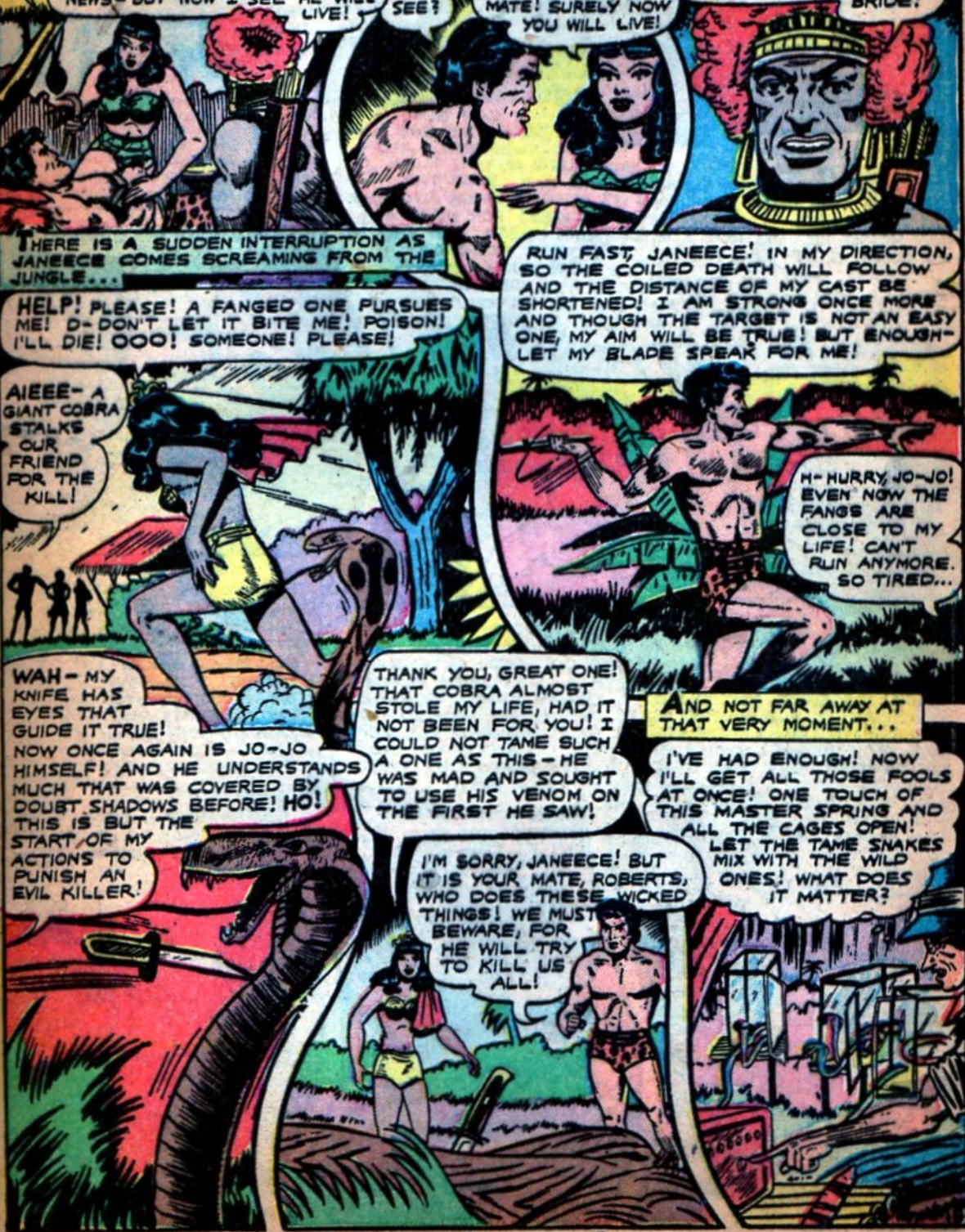
I'M SORRY, JANEED! BUT
IT IS YOUR MATE, ROBERTS,
WHO DOES THESE WICKED
THINGS! WE MUST
BEWARE, FOR
HE WILL TRY
TO KILL US
ALL!

RUN FAST, JANEED! IN MY DIRECTION,
SO THE COILED DEATH WILL FOLLOW
AND THE DISTANCE OF MY CAST BE
SHORTENED! I AM STRONG ONCE MORE
AND THOUGH THE TARGET IS NOT AN EASY
ONE, MY AIM WILL BE TRUE! BUT ENOUGH-
LET MY BLADE SPEAK FOR ME!

H- HURRY, JO-JO!
EVEN NOW THE
FANGS ARE
CLOSE TO MY
LIFE! CAN'T
RUN ANYMORE.
SO TIRED...

AND NOT FAR AWAY AT
THAT VERY MOMENT...

I'VE HAD ENOUGH! NOW
I'LL GET ALL THOSE FOOLS
AT ONCE! ONE TOUCH OF
THIS MASTER SPRING AND
ALL THE CAGES OPEN!
LET THE TAME SNAKES
MIX WITH THE WILD
ONES! WHAT DOES
IT MATTER?



THE CAGES SPRING OPEN WITH A SINISTER
CLICK AND DEATH SLIDES OUT...

UGHH—MANY
FANGED ONES
COME! WE
CANNOT
ESCAPE!

JO-JO!
HELP
US!

OHH—SO MANY! HOW CAN
WE SAVE OUR LIVES?

HOLEEE—ARE OUR
LIVES TO END SO? I
WILL FIGHT TO THE
DEATH!

BUT WAIT! A PLAN GROWS IN
MY MIND! I HAVE WATCHED
YOU MANY TIMES, JANECEE,
AND WHAT YOU DO I CAN DO!
QUICKLY, POINT OUT THE FANGED
COBRA WHICH YOU
HAVE TAMED THE
MOST—HE
THAT YOU
HAVE
HANDLED
LONGEST!

I KNOW NOT WHAT
IS IN YOUR MIND,
JO-JO, BUT YONDER
SNAKE IS THE ONE
YOU SEEK! FOR
MANY MOONS HE
HAS BEEN IN MY
CAGES!

IT IS
GOOD!
MY PLAN IS
DESPERATE,
BUT I MUST
TRY IT!

IF I CAN BUT
STROKE THIS ONE
INTO SUBMISSION AND
CAUSE HIM TO TURN,
HE MAY LEAD THE
OTHERS BACK INTO THE
CAGES! FOR HE IS A
KING COBRA, AND THE
OTHERS WILL OBEY—IF
WE HAVE MUCH LUCK! IF I
FAIL, I WILL DIE QUICKLY—NO
MAN CAN BE BITTEN TWICE
AND LIVE!

AND THE WILD
GAMBLE COMES OFF! THE
TAME COBRA CHANGES
DIRECTION AND BEGINS TO
LEAD THE OTHERS BACK
TOWARD THE CAGES...

AIEEE—MY PLAN
WORKS WELL INDEED!
NOT YET
MUST
WE
DIE!

BUT ROBERTS, SEEING HIS
FIENDISH SCHEME FOILED,
RUSHES ANGRILY TOWARD
THE SNAKES...

BACK! GO BACK, YOU SLIMY
TRAITORS! I RELEASED YOU
SO YOU COULD KILL THOSE
FOOLS! NOW YOU DOUBLE-
CROSS ME! BUT YOU CAN'T—
I WON'T LET
YOU, NOT EVEN
IF I HAVE TO
KILL EVERY
ONE OF YOU
MYSELF!

NO! DON'T! AHHHH—
THEY'RE TURNING ON
ME INSTEAD! BITING ME
IN A D-DOZEN PLACES!
HELP! SAVE ME, JO-JO!
I'VE BEEN WICKED—BUT
SAVE ME AND I'LL REPENT—
I'LL DO ANYTHING! ONLY
JUST DON'T LET THEM
KILL ME...

BUT THE SNAKES ARE ONLY
THE AGENTS OF JUSTICE AND
THERE IS LITTLE JO-JO
CAN DO! SO LATER ON...

GOODBYE, JO-JO AND
TANEE! YOU HAVE DONE
MUCH TO AID ME! AND I
WILL SPEND THE REST OF
MY LIFE IN CLEARING THE
JUNGLE OF SUCH FORKED-
TONGUED DEATH!

FAREWELL, GOOD
FRIENDS! I WOULD
HAVE SAVED EVEN
THE EVIL ONE IF I
COULD—BUT HE
PAID FOR
HIS BAD
DEEDS!

The End

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